

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 062 764

EM 009 743

AUTHOR Paisley, Matilda B.  
TITLE Social Policy Research and the Realities of the  
System: Violence Done to TV Research.  
INSTITUTION Stanford Univ., Calif. Inst. for Communication  
Research.  
SPONS AGENCY National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C.  
PUB DATE Mar 72  
NOTE 62p.  
  
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29  
DESCRIPTORS Aggression; \*Children; Policy; \*Policy Formation;  
Researchers; Social Behavior; \*Television;  
\*Television Viewing; \*Violence

ABSTRACT

It is the premise of this report that an appropriate role for social scientists is to aid national decisionmakers by doing policy research: monitoring social problem areas, defining policy problems, and outlining, testing and refining policy alternatives. The report also points out some obstacles, such as the academic goals of detachment and generalizable theory, which stand in the way of good policy research. As a specific example of policy research, the author describes the NIMH (National Institute of Mental Health) sponsored research on television and social behavior, and points out some shortcomings: an industry veto on advisory committee members, the failure of the advisory committee to specify the research question, and the pressure for a unanimous report which allowed the industry representatives to obscure the research findings. Unless social scientists learn from mistakes such as this, the author warns that policymakers are likely to stop consulting social scientists, and social policies will suffer. (RH)

ED 062764

SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH  
AND THE REALITIES OF THE SYSTEM:  
VIOLENCE DONE TO TV RESEARCH

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Matilda B. Paisley

Institute for Communication Research

Stanford University

March, 1972

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The preparation of this review and related activities have been supported in part by National Science Foundation grant GR-86 to Edwin B. Parker et al.

The author thanks the many people who shared with her their experiences or perspectives on the TV-violence project. Special thanks to Douglas A. Fuchs for the privilege of quoting from his unpublished memoir of service on the NIMH staff.

New material is still being incorporated into this paper. Suggestions and criticisms are sought.

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Beep, Beep! Move over Road Runner, 'cause here come a dozen distinguished behavioral scientists who say that watching your antics and other violence-laden fare may be hazardous to some kids' mental health.<sup>1</sup>

A blue-ribbon committee of social scientists has concluded that there is no causal relationship between television programs that depict violence and aggressive behavior by the majority of children.<sup>2</sup>

The problem with this report is that like so much of what the administration has done on these kinds of things, the cynicism of anybody really being interested in the truth is apparent from the beginning.<sup>3</sup>

TV violence held harmless to youth.<sup>4</sup>

Dynamite is hidden in the surgeon general's report on children and television violence, for the report reveals that most children are definitely and adversely affected by televised mayhem.<sup>5</sup>

Whether by intent or ineptitude, the committee misrepresented some of the data, ignored some of it and buried all of it alive in prose that was obviously meant to be unreadable and unread.<sup>6</sup>

The report confirms previous research and supports our often-stated position that the effects of TV programming are much more limited than is frequently charged. The facts set forth give balance and perspective in an area where exaggeration and loose charges have been rife. The report provides useful information to the broadcasting industry.<sup>7</sup>

Our studies show conclusively that TV does not cause violence -- except when it does.<sup>8</sup>

Now I want to know where do we go from here with what we've found out. I want recommendations.<sup>9</sup>

These comments are a sampling of the publicity generated by the report to the Surgeon General on the social effects of television, the committee that wrote and approved the report, and the research that was the basis of the report. The news coverage has brought many social scientists face to face with the Pandora's box of government-commissioned research. It is increasingly true that social scientists' research areas happen also to be defined as

policymakers' societal ills. Social scientists can even take some credit for sensitizing policymakers to social dimensions of problems formerly construed as legal, economic, medical, etc. Now, whatever the benefits of common cause with policymakers (and there are several), social scientists find that the new game is not always played by their rules.

### Why Social Policy Research?

When it seemed that this nation's biggest needs were technological, the government called in physical scientists and engineers. Today's problems are largely societal, and the government turns to social scientists for help in finding solutions. In the past ten years we have seen an ever-greater involvement of social scientists in matters of policy. Early involvement in a large-scale project ended when adverse publicity caused Project Camelot to be aborted.

Both inside and outside government, spokesmen have called for a stronger relationship between social scientists and policymakers:

Inside government. In 1966 Senator Fred Harris introduced the National Foundation for the Social Sciences Act. The purpose of the legislation was to enhance the status of social scientists by legislative mandate.

In a similar vein, Senator Walter F. Mondale introduced the Opportunity and Social Accounting Act. Originally introduced in 1967 and reintroduced in 1969, the legislation proposed a means for close alliance between social scientists and policymakers. The Act called for a Council of Social Advisors whose primary function was to prepare a Social Report for the President to present to Congress. In addition, the Act provided for a joint Congressional Committee on the Social Report.

Social policy research is invoked in recommendations by the Nixon administration that all federal agencies: 1) submit, as part of their budget justification, an annual plan for program impact and strategy evaluation; 2) prepare and annually update a two- to three-year government-wide social evaluation plan.<sup>10</sup>



One begins to sense the cumulative effect of government's gradual accommodation of the new role of social science in the recent reorganization of the Bureau of the Budget into the Office of Management and Budget. To an extent unconceived in BOB, OMB emphasizes program performance measures. Under the prodding of OMB and their own offices of planning and evaluation, such agencies as HEW, HUD, OEO, and Labor now annually conduct millions of dollars of evaluation research. A certain fraction of their budgets and the budgets of their contractors must now be set aside for program evaluation.<sup>11</sup>

Of course, evaluation research is just one form of social policy research. Other research modes have been described in the National Science Foundation's report, Knowledge into Action: Improving the Nation's Use of the Social Sciences. The authors describe methods developed by social scientists for measuring, evaluating, and predicting policy-relevant variables in the society. They urge government to consult with social scientists in all phases of policy formation and execution.

Outside government. Among those outside of government who urge close ties between social scientists and policymakers is Raymond Bauer, who, with his fellow authors of the book Social Indicators,<sup>12</sup> issued a charge for social scientists to develop sets of indicators that will provide policymakers with needed data.

The patient pressure of the Russell Sage Foundation in the area of social policy research has resulted in some useful reports and conceptual books, but more importantly it has legitimated policy research among a certain group of social scientists trained in more theoretical traditions. Another effect of policy research programs at Russell Sage, the Brookings Institution, and other nongovernmental centers has been the conversion and inspiration of social science graduate students, many of whom are now approaching their careers from the beginning with a policy orientation, scarcely questioning that this orientation is as legitimate as their predecessors' concern for social science theory.

Private research organizations like NORC are now finding that an unanticipated large volume of their work consists of evaluation research

either directly for the government or through subcontracts from universities.

If it is true, as Ithiel Pool has said, that "the only hope for humane government in the future is through the extensive use of the social sciences by government,"<sup>13</sup> then we may take encouragement from the fact that, particularly in the past ten years, policymakers and social scientists have worked out highly successful rationales and procedures for "cooperation without co-optation." If the quality and impact of the research itself still leaves something to be desired, that is a problem for both policymakers (more explicit statement of measurable program goals) and social scientists (more powerful field-based methods) to grapple with.

#### What Are the Appropriate Roles of Social Scientists?

One of the broadest views of the role of the social scientist in the policy formation and execution process is given by Donald T. Campbell:

The experimenting society will be one which vigorously tries out proposed solutions to recurrent problems, which makes hard-headed multi-dimensional evaluations of the outcomes, and, where the remedial effort seems ineffective, goes on to other possible solutions. The focus will be on reality testing and persistence in seeking solutions to problems. The justification of new programs will be in terms of the seriousness of the problem, not in the claim that we can know for certain in advance what therapy will work.<sup>14</sup>

This is clearly a different conception of the policy researcher's role than such traditional conceptions as "the detached consultant," "the evaluator on-call," "the explicator of what went wrong," etc. Continuous involvement of the policy researcher through all phases of program development (which differs from his traditional role in the same way that preventive medicine differs from disease therapy) implies a set of sub-roles,

almost necessarily embodied in the same researcher, to guarantee policy-makers the information they need when they need it.

We conceive of six such sub-roles (see Figure 1):

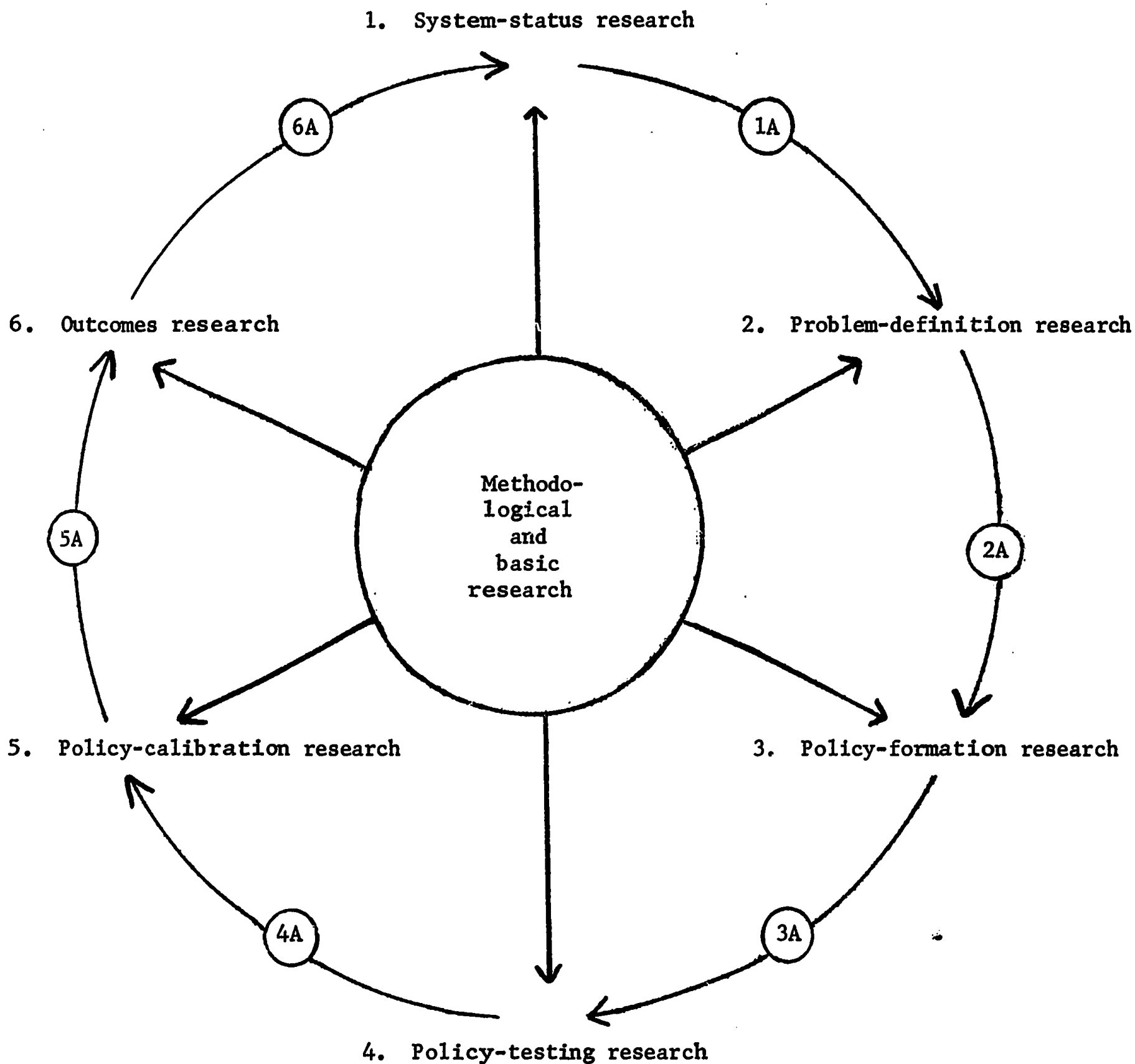
1. Monitoring social problem areas. By doing what might be called system-status research, policy-oriented social scientists provide data on the system's present performance at either the macro or micro level. The researcher can monitor, for example, the "entire" health services delivery system or a neighborhood health center. Over time, monitoring may focus on economic efficiency, political support, public knowledge, attitudes, compliance, utilization, and actual delivery of social benefit.

Current discussion of monitoring focuses on the composite of measures called "social indicators." Recent reviews (e.g., Sheldon and Freeman<sup>15</sup>) which have the benefit of hindsight conclude that social indicators are neither extremely powerful nor worthless. Indicators are a kind of problem-alerting system. However, they do not explicate problems or suggest solutions. When a social indicator flashes red, the policy-maker and policy researcher must combine their expertise to diagnose the root problem.

2. Defining problem areas. The policy researcher has an important role in empiricizing the root problem. This is the starting point of problem-definition research. Gaining momentum with case studies, examination of previous research on the problem, and new conceptualization, this phase moves on to causal inference designs. The goal of problem-definition research is to establish a causal linkage that serves several purposes: (a) satisfies policymakers and policy researchers that they understand the problem; (b) satisfies legislators and the public that the problem is tractable and worthy of public resources; and (c) suggest intervention points in the event sequence.

A particular problem of this phase is that it bogs down. Exhaustively pursued, causal inference is a process of infinite regress and iteration. Tough-minded philosophers of science (e.g., Karl Popper, Carl

Figure 1. The "Steering Wheel" of Policy Research



- 
- 1A. "Official cognizance" of a social problem or deficiency.
  - 2A. "Official interpretation" of the problem's scope and origins.
  - 3A. Choice of policy alternative for testing.
  - 4A. Choice of best alternative for implementation (macro parameters of policy fixed).
  - 5A. Details of policy (micro parameters fixed).
  - 6A. Decision to go forward with implemented policy, iterate to a new policy in the same vein, or "start over."

Hempel) hold this to be true in all science. It is particularly true in social policy research, where the researcher cannot compromise health or welfare with experimental designs, nor wait for a multi-year time-series to be fulfilled. Even while follow-on research is being planned, the researcher must be willing to draw policy-relevant inferences from the data at hand.

At this point, given some causal indications, the policymaker can "get on with" his exploration of policy alternatives. However, if the researcher is wholly tentative, the policymaker is unlikely to risk a strong stand on his own.

3. Delineating policy alternatives. In this role the policy researcher seeks to learn what can be done. Problem definition research specifies the ideal system-state and the present system-state. The discrepancy between the two provides input for policy delineation and formation. In practice, policy formation requires at least a three-factor co-optimization.

Factor one represents economic feasibility. Factor two represents political reality. And the third factor, often ignored, is a set of psychosociological considerations. A successful policy alternative must meet these economic, political, and psychosociological tests.

Policy alternatives are nominated by monitoring other systems; gathering expert opinion (several kinds of expert panels can be convened, e.g., for a medical information problem, one talks with doctors, nurses, hospital staff, administrators, patients, and engineers); collecting information on cost and technical feasibility; etc. Preliminary evaluation is based on the experience of other systems implementing analogous alternatives; simulation or microtesting; and projecting alternatives against professional policy-makers.

4. Testing policy alternatives. After policy alternatives have been reduced to a number that can be compared (best) in experiments, the policy researcher formally tests the remaining alternatives.

A common and understandable shortcoming among policy researchers in the testing role is premature closure on just one alternative. Carrying a single alternative into the policy-testing phase leaves the policymaker with the binary finding of success or failure. Carrying multiple alternatives into the policy-testing phase leaves the policy maker with a range of choices, from "most successful" through "somewhat successful" to "least successful." It is this type of openness to a range of alternatives that Donald Campbell advocates in his American Psychologist article, "Reforms as experiments."

The policy researcher must be prepared to do field experiments or quasi-experiments. He may have to adapt present techniques to fit his needs.

5. Calibrating policies. A fifth role of the policy researcher is that of policy calibrator. This role assumes that one or two alternatives have proved themselves at a level of confidence that justifies the cost of "calibrating" them to operate optimally across the range of settings or contingencies in which the policy problem must be addressed.

Once the alternative is fully operational, research should be non-reactive, continuous, and sensitive to small changes in system performance. Policy-calibration research is exceeded only by outcomes research (below) in the stress it places on existing social research methodology. Furthermore, the stresses are different. Policy calibration presumes validity of measurement and strains for sensitivity. Outcomes research presumes sensitivity of measurement and strains for validity -- that is, for a realistically broad definition of "outcomes."

Policy-calibration research can be seen as an extension of "formative evaluation." Education researchers make a distinction between "formative" and "summative" evaluation. The first provides information during the development of a program and the second provides information for deciding between alternative programs. Formative evaluation takes place in the third phase - policy formation, and in the fifth phase - policy calibration. Summative evaluation takes place in the fourth phase - policy testing, and in the sixth phase - outcomes research.



Other research strategies appropriate during policy calibration include surveys concerning psychosociological acceptance of the program, micro-field experiments to improve the quality of the program, cost-accounting to measure the dollar-cost effectiveness of the program, political feasibility studies, and "settling-in" studies in general. All of these policy aspects have been tested previously during policy formation and policy testing. In this phase the goal is optimum match of program to the social-political-economic system in which it must function.

6. Assessing outcomes. Our policy researcher must also be prepared to do outcomes research. This phase is a long-term process of judging total efficacy of a program that is, by now if ever, calibrated to its setting. The challenge of this phase, rarely met in practice, is to define an outcomes criterion beyond intra-systemic counting of people served, facilities and personnel utilized, cost-benefit ratios, and political survival. All of these may be necessary concomitants of a successful program, but only in the sense that famine relief yields empty food sacks.

The "diffusion of innovations" literature reports many instances of programs that succeeded by every obvious criterion and then were quietly discontinued after the change agents departed. New outcomes criteria are needed to measure the ecological fit of programs to their settings, in which technical and macro-social criteria are first satisfied and then transcended by the criterion of program impact upon the individual.

In the two decades of large-scale education policy research, criteria from the "cognitive domain" had their day and are now yielding to criteria from the "affective domain." That is, the amount learned gives way as a criterion to how a student feels about learning, since the latter and not the former will have lifelong consequences. Analogously in the field of health services research, criteria based on "negative health" (sickness) must first be satisfied and then yield to criteria based on "positive health." Preventive medicine is slowly turning the corner from "negative health" concerns to "positive health" concerns. Policy researchers should be aware of, and soon prepared for, the methodological requirements of "positive health" measurement.

Outcomes research must also be sensitive to unintended effects of the program. An example of an obvious "unexpected" outcome was a new assembly-line procedure that enabled workers on piece-rate to earn higher wages than the supervisor. The procedure was quickly discontinued.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps most important of all, the product of outcomes research must be a clear evaluation of the program. All too often an academic style of reporting leaves the policymaker in a quandary. The academic researcher feels that figures speak for themselves. Interpretation, recommendations, or directed fault-finding are not part of his style. One consequence is that the evaluator's vagueness is clarified by the policymaker. Hawkrige reports such a case.<sup>17</sup>

In one case studied in our second survey of compensatory education programs we found that the program director had interpreted the exact conclusions of his evaluator's stepwise regression analysis, and had based his recommendations on his own interpretation. Needless to say, his interpretation was extremely favorable to his own program and his recommendation was that the program should continue at a higher level of funding! On close examination, the number of statistically significant differences observable fell below what might occur by chance, and our discussion with the evaluator yielded some radical differences of opinion between himself and the program director. These sordid facts are the stuff of educational evaluation.

Although outcomes are best tested in field experiments, some evaluators will continue to use non-experimental methods. Often, too, a researcher is not consulted until policy implementation precludes randomization and control. In these cases, the best non-experimental techniques should be used. Present state-of-the-art designs include time-series analysis, regression discontinuity, and multivariate-crosslagged correlations.



Figure 1 presents these six research roles as a policy research "steering wheel." The six subpoints on the circle, one after each research phase, are the action steps that must precede the next research phase. For example, system-status research must alert the policymaker that a problem exists. Infant mortality may be up, or unemployment may be shifting from blue collar to white collar ranks, or crimes may be increasing. Step 1A on the "steering wheel" is "official cognizance" of a social problem or deficiency. NIH calls for research on causes of the rising infant mortality rate; DOL decides to study the reasons behind shifting unemployment; the President establishes a commission or committee to investigate the causes of violence.

Before asking if the policy-oriented social scientist will be able to meet these new demands, we must make two final comments about him. First, he may be ready to assume any or all of the research roles. In some projects, he may carry out many of the six phases. In other projects, he may be responsible for one phase. Emphasis is not on the role, but on the wheel as a whole.

Second, the policy-oriented scientist is able to use his methods and approaches in a variety of problem areas. For instance, he may find himself working with policymakers on health, or employment, or safety, or transportation, or welfare. He is content-broad rather than content-bound.

#### Are Social Scientists Up to the Task?

Having explored the roles that a policy-oriented social scientist must play, we now turn to the third question: Are social scientists up to the task? As might be expected, there is no single, simple answer.

Senator Mondale writes that "while most who have written me believe that they are [up to the task], some are less confident. One social scientist of long experience warned, 'The behavioral sciences, in my judgment, are in no real position at this point to give any hard data on social problems or conditions. There are many promises and pretensions; however, when it comes to delivery, what is usually forthcoming are more requests for further research....'"<sup>18</sup>

In general, the evidence suggests that social scientists want to contribute to the policymaking process. However, social scientists often seem unwilling or unable to carry out policy research. This problem is reflected in a statement from the Russell Sage Foundation: "A large number of grants and contracts are provided by the federal government to university-affiliated persons and university research centers. The problem is that such funds may be accepted by academicians who in many cases proceed to do research consistent with their theoretical and scholarly interests but not remotely evaluative in terms of program goals."<sup>19</sup>

Herbert Gans makes a similar point. He suggests that there are two reasons why academic social science does not match the needs of policy social science. These are that:

1. academic social science strives to understand society rather than to intervene in society, and
2. academic social science emphasizes detachment, "impersonal universalism," and high levels of generality and abstractness.

Gans goes on to say that this orientation results in theories and concepts that are relevant to bystanders rather than participants.<sup>20</sup>

Gans illustrates the difference between an academic sociologist and a policy-oriented sociologist in this example: "...there have been many studies of the culture of poverty or lower-class culture among the poor, but none that I know of which investigated changes in culture when poor people obtained higher incomes, or what happened to behavior when people escaped from poverty."<sup>21</sup>

Another closely related problem is described in the NSF book, Knowledge into Action. After faulting social scientists for their failure to communicate plain findings in plain language, the authors conclude: "Social scientists fail to meet demands on them in a second way. When faced with a specific problem that has no ready-made conceptual answer, they frequently retreat to the laboratory for more research and more facts. But the client would ordinarily settle for less than a scientifically adequate answer."<sup>22</sup>

Government is calling on social scientists to help solve today's problems. Scientists are answering this call. However, the alliance will be successful only if those who contribute to the policymaking process recognize that the orientation of a researcher testing social policy is quite different from a researcher creating social theory. It is important to refocus our thinking about appropriate roles and contributions of social scientists.

Senator Mondale writes: "If social scientists have not developed the necessary sophistication to fully participate in policy determination, then they must -- and very soon. For government at all levels is going to ask them for advice and value judgments. This responsibility is going to be thrust upon them, and I don't think they are going to refuse it."<sup>23</sup>

We will be asked and we will not refuse. However, how long social scientists will be asked for help depends on how we respond. If we continue to do theory-oriented research, we will lose our credibility as advisors of social policy.

#### Television and Social Behavior

The credibility of our research is the principal factor in the two examples chosen to illustrate ways we are working in social policy areas. The first of these is the particularly visible example of the NIMH television and social behavior project. The second is the USOE equal educational opportunities study.

To place the television and social behavior study in historical context, let me relate some events just prior to and during the time that Senator John Pastore asked for a study of violence on television. (For a brief chronology of events, see Appendix I.)

Senator John O. Pastore is Chairman of the Commerce Subcommittee on Communications. Behavior Today<sup>24</sup> has called him the "watchdog and friend of the T.V. industry." Sandra Ball-Rokeach, who was co-director of the Media and Violence Task Force of the Violence Commission, has said one must realize "that every so many years Senator Pastore brings up the mass media

violence issue giving the appearance of a hard line, but his voting record regarding FCC and other legislative matters which involve the interests of the mass media is hardly consistent with a hard line approach."<sup>25</sup>

Pastore's own words and actions suggest his position vis-a-vis the television industry. During his hearings he often seems favorable to the industry. A case in point began on January 22, 1969, when the FCC revoked the license of WHDH. By March 4 Pastore was holding hearings on FCC policy matters and TV programming. During these hearings Pastore seemed eager to put the television industry in the best possible light. Let the recorded dialogue from the hearings speak for itself. Wasilewski, President of National Association of Broadcasters had been discussing the renewal of licenses.

Senator Pastore: "In other words, it is your view -- let me see if I can sum it up properly for you -- that where a broadcaster has lived up to the promise that he made at the time he was granted the license, and operated the station in the public interest, and observed the requirements of the law, he shouldn't be harassed by new applications coming in. He ought to be allowed a renewal of his license as a matter of course, is that it?

Mr. Wasilewski: Yes sir.

Senator Pastore: Well, that makes a lot of sense to me. ...You are saying that on the question of renewal, the tendency has been to encourage new applications to come in, which places the broadcaster in the position of not knowing at the expiration of his license, whether or not he is going to have it renewed. Now, tell me because you are an expert in the field, and there are arguments for and there are arguments against. The argument for encouraging new applications is that it creates more or less a restraint or a certain amount of control on the part of the broadcaster to live up to his promise because he is never too sure unless he does that he will get the license renewal. That is the logic for that. I guess that is the reason for it.

On the other hand, the argument is unless a broadcaster knows definitely whether or not he is going to be in the business after three years, that might restrict him or confine him in engaging the proper personnel, making the proper expansion and bringing in modernized equipment because he is never too sure. Aren't those the two factors that are to be considered?

Mr. Wasilewski: Yes, sir.

Senator Pastore: In other words, a man submits his applications and receives his license. In his application he sets forth that he is going to operate that station in the public interest. He makes that promise. That is a condition for his license. Your argument is if he lives up to it, he hadn't ought to be outbid in promises after three years by another entrepreneur who comes in and says 'I will do it better.'

Mr. Wasilewski: Yes, sir, I wish you had written the last three pages of my testimony instead of myself.

Senator Pastore: I have been living with this for a long time."<sup>26</sup>

Pastore also seemed to follow suggestions made by the television industry. During the subcommittee hearings on March 19, 1969, Vincent Wasilewski, President of NAB, urged the "subcommittee and the Congress to give priority to legislation which would require the Commission -- before accepting the application of any other person for a broadcast license under renewal -- first to determine that a grant of the renewal application would not be in the public interest, convenience, or necessity."<sup>27</sup>

Pastore was agreeable. Later in the hearings, Pastore suggested the FCC should protect the licensee. He said: "After all, renewals are only for a three-year period, and this is a highly sensitive industry. It must have continuity, it must have stability, it must modernize, it must have very expert and qualified personnel."<sup>28</sup>

These hearings on FCC policy matters took place in March of 1969. By May of that year, Pastore had written his Senate bill 2004. Pastore said the bill would "establish orderly procedures for the consideration of



application for renewal of broadcast licenses."<sup>29</sup> It seemed to be exactly what Wasilewski called for.

Hearings on S.2004 took place in October and December of 1969. The hearings were never completed. They became unnecessary after the "FCC voted 6-1 on January 15, 1970, to renew the licenses of radio and television stations as long as they have 'substantially' met community needs. The Commission said it would give past performance more emphasis than the promises of superior programming made by competitors for licenses."<sup>30</sup>

In the midst of this, Pastore formally requested the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to direct the Surgeon General to assemble a committee to study the effect of televised violence. This was to be the definitive study that would provide long-sought answers.

The possible effects of viewing violence on television had been the theme of much research and many investigations. Many of the relevant studies are reviewed by Berkowitz (1960) and Schramm (1961).

A few months before Pastore asked for the TV-violence study, Congressman Hale Boggs and CES President Frank Stanton were discussing the possible effects of viewing violence on television. They exchanged these words:

Stanton: "We don't yet have the methodology with which to make the study.

Boggs: We have had investigations since 1954. This is the study-est thing that has ever happened with no results."<sup>31</sup>

#### Advisory Committee

March 12, 1969, William H. Stewart, Surgeon General, made a statement to the communications subcommittee regarding the violence study. He said approximately one million dollars would be spent and assured the subcommittee that no new money would be appropriated. As it happened, the million dollars was reappropriated from building funds of the Community Mental Health Center Program.

In early April, Stewart sent letters describing the functions and purposes of the committee and requesting names for it. Letters went to the following organizations: American Anthropological Association, American

Sociological Association, American Psychological Association, and American Psychiatric Association. Similar letters went to CBS, NBC, ABC, and NAB. On April 29, 1969, Stewart sent a list of 40 nominees to the three networks and NAB. Each was given the opportunity to veto, without explanation, any of the 40 candidates. Frank Stanton of CBS, in what is now a classic response, declined the opportunity to veto names. He said, "I must respectfully decline to indicate any preference among them. Because the investigation is to be yours, while the subject under investigation will be the industry of which CBS is a part, we feel the selection of the study group should be left entirely in your hands. I know you seek to construct the most objective study possible, and I would be most reluctant to introduce even a suggestion of bias into the selection of the investigators."

The three others consulted felt differently. Everett H. Erlick, Group Vice President and General Counsel, answering for ABC, said in part "...and we believe that the following candidates would not be appropriate for this kind of study: Albert Bandura, Leonard Berkowitz, Leo Bogart, Ralph Garry, Otto Larsen." Thomas E. Ervin, Executive Vice President of NBC named Bandura, Garry, and Larsen as being inappropriate nominees. Vincent T. Wasilewski, President of NAB, replied: "Pursuant to your request, I am listing the names of those persons who, in our opinion, would not be as objective on this subject as others on the list: Bandura, Berkowitz, Bogart, Eisenberg, Garry, Larsen, and Tannenbaum."<sup>32</sup>

The seven were blackballed by the networks and NAB because they had done research indicating that viewing TV violence leads to increased aggressive behavior, particularly in children. Additional background on them:

1. Albert Bandura is professor of psychology at Stanford. His research has shown that children become more aggressive after watching violent films.

2. Leo Bogart is executive vice president and general manager of the Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association. He has published a book on television.

3. Leonard Berkowitz is professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin. His research has also shown that aggressive films stimulate aggressive behavior in children.

4. Leon Eisenberg is professor of child psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Medical School. He has spoken against the kinds of research done by the networks.

5. Ralph Garry is professor of educational psychology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. He was critical of the networks while serving as a consultant to the Dodd Juvenile Delinquency Committee in the early 1960's. He has also published a book on television.

6. Otto Larsen is professor of sociology at the University of Washington. He edited the book, Violence and the Mass Media.

7. Percy Tannenbaum is a psychologist and professor in the graduate school of public policy at University of California, Berkeley. At various times in the past, including testimony before the Violence Commission in 1968, he has interpreted the research evidence as supporting the violence viewing/aggressiveness hypothesis.

The industry blackballing was not publicly discussed until Edwin B. Parker, professor of communication at Stanford University, began making inquiries. He attended a meeting of the committee in Palo Alto early in 1970. When he noticed that prominent researchers were missing from the committee while industry representatives were plentiful, he wrote Senator Lee Metcalf about his concern. Metcalf then wrote Secretary Finch requesting information on the committee choice. Finch replied to Metcalf on April 22, 1970, saying that the industry had been given the opportunity to review nominees for the committee and to veto any names which they believed would lack "scientific impartiality."

It is still not publicly known how the final selections were made. The industry originally suggested 35 names for the committee. Five of these eventually served on the committee. The professional/academic groups suggested 29 names for the committee. One of these (Siegel) eventually served



on the committee. Some suggest that a subtle form of veto took place while the 33 names were being narrowed to 12. For example, Stanford faculty members Wilbur Schramm, Eleanor Maccoby, Albert Bandura, and Alberta Siegel had all researched and written extensively about the social effects of television. Albert Bandura had already been vetoed by the industry. The HEW policy of one-per-institution meant that two more of these names would not be chosen. The two potentially more "contentious" candidates were eliminated. Another source of bias and/or pressure may have been Richard Moore, Special Consultant to the Secretary, HEW and liaison to the TV-violence project. Mr. Moore was the former president and general manager of KTTV, Los Angeles. One of the twelve chosen, Professor Eveline Omwake had not been on any of the preliminary lists. She was Moore's daughter's teacher in college. It is not known how much, if any, influence Mr. Moore had in the choosing of Professor Omwake or any of the other committee members. The final decisions were apparently made with regard for race, sex, political acceptability, and heterogeneity of background.

The twelve chosen were:

1. Ira H. Cisin, Professor of Sociology and Director, social research project, George Washington University. His special interests include development of mathematical models and improvement of measurement technique for social science. He has often served as a statistical and methodological consultant to CBS. Concurrent with his membership on the TV-violence project, he was a consultant on a \$250,000 CBS contract.

2. Thomas Coffin, vice president, National Broadcasting Company. His special interests are propaganda, attitude, and social psychological effects of television.

3. Irving L. Janis, professor, department of psychology, Yale University. He has studied psychological reactions to objective danger situations, fear arousal, attitude change, and decision-making.

4. Joseph T. Klapper, director of social research, Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., whose special interests are mass communication, attitude change, public opinion, and social science methodology.

5. Harold Mendelsohn, professor of mass communication and director, Communication Arts Center, University of Denver. He has interest in sociology of mass communication, motivation, attitude, and public opinion. He is a CBS consultant working on the CBS-funded project with Dr. Cisin.

6. Evaline Omwake, professor and chairman, department of child development, Connecticut College, whose special interests are early childhood education and child development.

7. Charles Pinderhughes, associate clinical professor of psychiatry, Tufts University and lecturer in psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, whose special interests are effects of ethnic group concentration on the education process.

8. Ithiel de Sola Pool, professor and chairman, department of political science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, whose special interests are political opinion and propaganda.

9. Alberta E. Siegel, professor of psychology, department of psychiatry, Stanford University Medical School. Her interests include methodology in child study and social psychology in childhood. She has been researching the effects of television on children since 1956.

10. Anthony F. C. Wallace, professor and chairman, department of anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, whose special interests are human behavior in disasters and other stress situations. Wallace resigned from the committee during the summer of 1970 to protest the veto power exercised by the TV industry. He later rejoined the committee.

11. Andrew S. Watson, professor of psychiatry and professor of law, University of Michigan, whose special interests are theory and treatment of family emotional problems.

12. Gerhart D. Weibe, dean, School of Communications, Boston University, whose special interests are mass media and communications research. Weibe was previously a research executive for CBS.

There were two reasons for including network representatives. First, if the industry participated on the committee, then it could not cry foul

after the results were made public. Second, if network officials were on the committee, then they could help make contacts and get materials that would be helpful to the committee and the researchers.

The first criterion for inclusion is difficult to accept, particularly since scientists with opposing viewpoints were excluded. If one accepts the premise that all major viewpoints should be represented so that no group can point an accusing finger after the committee has completed its work, then one would expect to see both Joseph Klapper and Albert Bandura on the committee. But if one argues that individuals publicly committed to one line of evidence would not be sufficiently impartial to the new evidence, then one would expect to see neither Joseph Klapper nor Albert Bandura on the committee. It is hard to find a rationale for including only one strong viewpoint.

The second criterion for inclusion seems equally difficult to accept. One assumes that the networks, even without committee representation, would be willing to provide assistance to the committee or the researchers as a professional courtesy. It is hard to believe that they would be helpful only if they were represented on the committee. The networks, even with committee representation, were not particularly helpful. A former NIMH staff member lists two examples of "cooperation" by the network representatives. He writes: "In the spring of this year, one contract researcher wrote to all three networks requesting the names and addresses of the producers of certain TV shows then on the air. He wanted to request interviews with them. The letters to NBC and CBS went, at our suggestion, directly to Drs. Coffin and Klapper. Neither of these nor the follow-up letters was answered until about six weeks and several telephone calls had passed. I believe the information was finally taken out of Variety Magazine. The ABC official responded helpfully to the researcher's request within five days of his receiving the letter.

I have already noted the reluctance of Dr. Klapper to apprise the Committee, in confidence, what research CBS was just now funding in the area of TV violence and children. After having politely refused to discuss the research at two early Committee meetings, he finally did describe their

efforts at the Spring, 1970 meeting. The research staff thus knew of the major research program CBS was funding only after our own project plans had been virtually completed. The possibility that the NIMH funded research could then complement other ongoing work was completely negated.

"The late revelation of the network's research plans was ironically underscored when Dr. Klapper explained to the Committee that Dr. Mendelsohn's absence from the meeting was due to his being involved on a consultation for CBS -- on one of their own new TV-Violence studies."<sup>33</sup>

Balance within the committee is important only as it relates to the role that the committee plays. In this case the formative power of the committee was extremely small. The NIMH staff, under the direction of Eli Rubinstein, had already made a number of decisions about the research project prior to the first convening of the committee. "Overall, the twelve committee members had almost nothing to say about conceptualizing the research to be funded by 'their' million dollars, about soliciting research contracts, or about any detail either theoretical or methodological."<sup>34</sup>

However, an advisory committee could have a more positive role. The committee should spend its early meetings reviewing the evidence already at hand, discussing methodologically acceptable research designs, agreeing on conceptually and operationally significant variables, including plausible third variables. For example, the TV-violence committee should have delineated the kinds of evidence that would have to be assembled before they could conclude that TV violence is, or is not, causally linked to aggressiveness. For example, Joseph Klapper wrote in 1957 that the mass media function "amid a nexus of other influences." By viewing respondents as persons functioning within particular social contexts, and bringing the study of extra-media factors into the research design, empirically documented theory may be possible. Klapper suggested that this new approach might provide concrete answers to such questions as whether televised crime and violence cause or trigger aggressive behavior.<sup>35</sup> Again in 1960 he wrote that any connections between watching television and overt behavior is indirect, mediated by a variety of factors. In addition, the direction of causation in such a relationship may flow in the opposite direction, as a child's interest in



TV programs is determined by his psychological needs, anxieties, spare-time interests, and general outlook, along with his age, sex, and intelligence.<sup>36</sup>

Another committeeman, H. Mendelsohn, wrote in 1964 that any social experience, such as mass communication, affects an individual in terms of his pre-existing tendencies to define situations in a given way. Therefore, the effects of the media should be examined in terms of the complex social web in which they take place. The influence of the media may be major or minor, depending on the social values, attitudes, and habits of communication that already exist in the society. It is easy to overemphasize the influence of the media because they are easier to watch and study than interpersonal communications. However, a new orientation has been developing in communications research, leading toward a view of the media as an influence operating in conjunction with other factors in the total social picture.<sup>37</sup>

Over the past fifteen years, these men have been building the case that the influence of television must be studied in the context of a variety of third variables that establish contingencies of effect. It seems unlikely that any survey, correlational, or experimental evidence that links TV violence to aggressiveness but fails to encompass third variables would be acceptable to them. Yet there is no record that they insisted on the inclusion of third variables in this set of funded studies. Instead, the omission of third variables in most studies (which is, of course, ultimately the fault of researchers themselves) became a subtle trap for rejecting outcomes when it was too late for the studies to be redone properly.

Funded studies. If the committee had decided which questions the research would be required to answer, some of today's problems could have been avoided. Instead, proposals came mainly from an "invisible college" of researchers -- colleagues of the staff who were already working in this area and were delighted to have more money to carry on their work. Other proposals were submitted by researchers who were willing to change the focus of their research somewhat to secure support. Of course, some proposals were submitted by researchers who had a genuine concern for the policy question. However, they received little guidance from the staff or committee. The TV-violence

project was very mission-oriented in its conception, but awards were finally made to researchers whose commitment to mission-oriented research was minimal or, at best, unfocused by any strong guidance. This was not the first, and unfortunately may not be the last, mission-oriented project that failed to overcome the theoretical bias of researchers. Academic norms are too influential for researchers to ignore unless the counternorm of policy relevance is strongly and continuously invoked by project monitors, in this case the NIMH staff and the Surgeon General's committee.

The funded studies, topics, and approximate amount of awards are listed in Appendix II.

Although his words are strong, Douglas Fuchs' characterization of the studies turn out to be prophetic:

"The discussion of which research projects are being funded and which of these are not well enough conceived to merit such funding is obviously a delicate one. With few exceptions (e.g., Lyle's expansion of his 1961 study, Ward's advertising study, McLeod/Chaffee's work on family communication) the surveys are superficial, ungeneralizable, myopic exercises in opportunistic grantsmanship for the sake of political expedience. It is evident though that not only were there several surveys of doubtful quality, but that some of the experiments on short-term TV effects are substantively spotty, the micro-analytical studies are extremely too expensive and micro-oriented for this project, the observational studies are conceptually very weak and will not likely be implemented properly, and the content analysis is as myopic as it is irrelevant to the whole project. ....One can rationalize the series of Maryland studies in that they were to concentrate on certain demographic subgroups (e.g., blacks) and on certain behaviors (e.g., TV viewing and tendencies toward violent attitudes and/or behaviors); the fact that the sampling was ill-conceived and thus leaves NIMH with little more than an exploratory, not generalizable study, is unfortunate but expected. That the Temple University group would have

been able to get some \$80,000 to do a 'benchmark' study of TV viewing in the United States and to propose a sample of 200 families is incredible."<sup>38</sup>

The TV-violence project as social policy research. If we think back to the policy research "steering wheel" we find that unofficial system-status research had highlighted the increasing violence in our society. It noted a possible connection between violent behavior and the amount of violence shown on television. Pastore represents the "official cognizer" of the problem. He called for a study of the effects of TV violence. What was needed was phase two on the steering wheel: problem definition. The 23 research projects, if policy-oriented, would have focused on defining the problem and gathering data relevant to causal clues. However, only a quarter of the funded studies even dealt with the main hypothesis of the project. Enough evidence was needed so that the next phases of policy alternative delineation and policy testing could get underway.

The Advisory Committee's Report to the Surgeon General. Next let's examine the outcome of the project as it comes to us through the committee report (the individual research reports, not yet released, tell a different story). A quotation from Plutarch can be paraphrased to express committee tensions as reflected in the report:

"Perseverance on the part of the network representatives is more prevailing than evidence on the effects of televised violence. Many things which cannot be overcome when they are taken together, yield themselves up when taken little by little."<sup>39</sup>

George Comstock, senior NIMH research coordinator of the TV-violence project, says that the staff referred to the committee as "the network five, the naive four, and the scientific three." The strong influence of the network five was felt during the meetings and is seen in the final report.

An article entitled "Violence Revisited" in Newsweek (March 6) says: "Several scientists closely connected with the committee, however, claim that the 'network five' -- as they came to be called -- managed to obfuscate and dilute most key findings that were detrimental to television's image. At one point during the committee meetings, for example, former CBS consultant Gerhardt Wiebe raised his eyes from a particularly damning piece of evidence and grumbled: 'This looks like it was written by someone who hates television.' But the most ardent defender of the industry was CBS research director Joseph Klapper, who lobbied for the inclusion, among other things, of a plethora of 'however's' in the final report."

Dr. John Murray, research coordinator on the project, said "There was a big move to get a consensus report. There was a lot of anger, the meetings were extremely tense with the warring factions sitting at either end of the table, glaring at each other, particularly toward the end."

As noted earlier, the committee had no influence over what questions the research would try to answer. However, when all the studies were completed, the committee framed two questions that the data should answer. According to the report, these are: "1. The real issue is how often watching television causes a young person to act aggressively, what predispositional conditions have to be there, and what different undesirable, as well as benign, forms the aggressive reaction takes when it occurs, and 2. How much contribution to the violence of our society is made by extensive violent television viewing by our youth?"

After briefly discussing how the new research findings help (in relatively small ways) to answer these questions, the committee writes: "In our judgment, the key question that we should be asked is thus a complicated one concerning alternatives. The proper question is, 'What kinds of changes, if any, in television content and practices could have a significant net effect in reducing the propensity to undesirable aggression among the audience, and what other effects, desirable and undesirable, would each such change have?'"

Usually one asks the questions before gathering data. However, since these are the questions raised by the report, we need to decide if they were adequate. The first two questions do not seem to fit the charge given the



committee by Senator Pastore. His letter to Robert Finch says "I am exceedingly troubled by the lack of any definitive information which would help resolve the question of whether there is a causal connection between televised crime and violence and anti-social behavior by individuals, especially children...." The third question seems to be more relevant to phase four on the steering wheel, policy testing.

It seems that the questions came too late and were probably the wrong ones to put to the data. The committee did not create criteria to judge or evaluate the causal significance of the association between viewing violence and aggressiveness. Instead, causal links were attributed after the fact to possible, and as yet untested, third variables. The report says, for example, that the causal relation operates only on some children who are predisposed to be aggressive, and that third variables trigger or modify the causal sequence. The third variables suggested are "pre-existing levels of aggression....underlying personality factors....parental control of television viewing, parental affection, parental punishment, or parental emphasis on nonaggression."

The Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on smoking and health handled causation in a different way. Their report says:

"The characterization of the assessment called for a specific term. The terms considered were 'factor,' 'determinant,' and 'cause.' ...The word cause is the one in general usage in connection with matters considered in this study, and it is capable of conveying the notion of a significant, effectual, relationship between an agent and an associated disorder or disease in the host. It should be said at once, however, that no member of this Committee used the word 'cause' in an absolute sense in the area of this study. Although various disciplines and fields of scientific knowledge were represented among the membership, all members shared a common conception of the multiple etiology of biological processes. No member was so naive as to insist upon mono-etiology in pathological processes or in vital phenomena. All were thoroughly aware of the fact that there are series of events in occurrences and developments in these fields, and that the end results are the net effect of many actions and counteractions."

The committee on smoking and health then goes on to say:

"Statistical methods cannot establish proof of a causal relationship in an association. The causal significance of an association is a matter of judgment which goes beyond any statement of statistical probability. To judge or evaluate the causal significance of the association between the attribute or agent and the disease, or effect upon health, a number of criteria must be utilized, no one of which is an all-sufficient basis for judgment. These criteria include:

- a. The consistency of the association
- b. The strength of the association
- c. The specificity of the association
- d. The temporal relationship of the association
- e. The coherence of the association."<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately, the precedent set by the committee on smoking and health had no effect on the committee on TV violence. How did the TV-violence committee make decisions on the new evidence? The committee was divided into three subcommittees. Each subcommittee was responsible for a group of studies. The three groups were:

1. Patterns of Use
2. Social Learning
3. Adolescent Aggressiveness and Television.

The Patterns of Use subcommittee wrote chapter 5 of the final report. It was chaired by Gerhardt D. Wiebe. Harold Mendelsohn, Anthony Wallace, and Thomas E. Coffin also worked on this chapter. Susan Lloyd-Jones and Eli Rubinstein were the staff representatives. The first draft was written by Rubinstein.

The Social Learning subcommittee wrote chapter 6 of the final report. It was chaired by Alberta Siegel. Others working on this subcommittee were Charles A. Pinderhughes, Irving L. Janis, and Eveline Omwake.

The first draft report of this material was written by Alberta Siegel and John Murray. Janis was dissatisfied with it. He felt that Murray had written a draft that was too narrative and preachy. Murray redid it using

a study-by-study approach. Janis also objected to that draft. Finally Janis agreed to work on it. Janis and Pool worked out the integrative sentences at one of the last meetings.

The Adolescent Aggressiveness and Television subcommittee, chaired by Ira Cisin, wrote Chapter 7. Others on the group were Ithiel Pool, Joseph Klapper, Andrew S. Watson, and Thomas E. Coffin. The first draft was written by George Comstock. At the first meeting of this group only Klapper and Cisin were present to meet with Comstock. Pool and Watson were unable to attend. Klapper objected to almost everything in the 32-page draft. He objected to the style, the form, and the interpretation of findings. He brought in pages of specific objections. Cisin supported Klapper. Comstock agreed to rewrite the draft. He again followed the outline of Chaffee's overview paper, but added more documentation. This version ran 65 pages. Cisin and Klapper were still unhappy with the draft and rewrote it. Cisin remodeled the first half. He took the third variable issue and in general downgraded the evidence. Instead of saying what results had been found in studies that included third variables, he implied that the third variables that had been investigated were only a drop in the bucket (which may be true in some ultimate, policy-irrelevant sense). The Klapper and Cisin draft left much of the text the same. However, they recast the findings and conclusions. Pool helped to tone down the Klapper-Cisin draft, eliminating some of the overkill.<sup>41</sup>

When Michael Adler, NIMH staff assistant, was asked why people were calling this the "Klapper draft" of the Surgeon General's report, she replied: "Well, let me put it this way. It would have been a very different report if Klapper hadn't been on the Committee. Let me also say that certain people were more interested in seeing that the report was phrased their way than anyone else."<sup>42</sup> This was verified by Comstock, who said that as much as 90 per cent of the report revision was made at the insistence of Klapper.

Eventually the draft of the final report was agreed on by all members of the committee. Those members wishing to add individual comments agreed to assemble their remarks into the 8th chapter. However, a closer reading

of that chapter reveals the same kind of reasoning applied to the reported studies. Klapper wrote almost fifteen years ago that the media had to be studied in the context of the surrounding environment. The 8th chapter says:

"The research reviewed here has uniformly been sharply focused on exposure to televised violence on the one hand and on aggressive tendencies on the other. The narrowness of this focus is not surprising, but exposure to televised violence does not exist in a vacuum. The narrowness of concentration in these studies has severely hampered the interpretation of results. Some of the most important questions that this committee would like to answer are relegated to the realm of future research."

The list of future research areas starts off:

1. television in the context of other mass media, and
2. mass media in the context of the total environment, particularly the home environment, etc.

It does not matter if we agree or disagree with these research areas. But it does matter that after a million dollars has been spent on research, the committee asks for future research in areas that some members had been talking about for fifteen years. A similar concern about the kinds of research being recommended after the million dollars was spent is voiced by W. J. Paisley:

"Chapter 8 of the Surgeon General's Report raises many questions for future research. It seems that all important questions are raised after the fact. Why did the committee not raise these questions to guide researchers at the beginning of the project?

The 'network five' seem to doubt that the studies bear strongly on the TV violence/aggression hypothesis. If this is true, who should restore the million dollars to the public treasury? If the researchers failed to carry out clear directions from the committee, should

they 'get off' with misused funds? Or should restitution be made by the committee, if it accepted appointment but did not labor 'to devise techniques and to conduct a study ... [to] establish scientifically insofar as possible what harmful effects, if any, these programs have on children?'

Another view, which I have heard from several people, is that the studies do link TV violence to youthful aggression. Their findings are consistent with earlier studies of aggressive behavior by researchers whom the networks blackballed.

However, if this view does not prevail against the networks' view that the studies were a waste of money, then where is the accountability in all this? What is the cost, to whom, if the committee's charge was subverted?"<sup>43</sup>

We can now ask ourselves the question which Pastore will probably ask of the Surgeon General and others in the March 21 hearings: What did the million dollars buy? The replies will probably cover four points:

1. The state of knowledge has been increased and updated,
2. Areas of needed research have been outlined,
3. A causal link has been established,
4. There is no proof for the catharsis hypothesis.

#### Policy alternatives

Looking back at the steering wheel once more, we note how far we have come. There was awareness of a problem (phase 1), which was followed by the official cognizance of the problem (phase 1A) when Pastore wrote Secretary Finch requesting a study. Problem definition (phase 2), although poorly conceived and executed, was completed by a committee, staff, and researchers who spent a million dollars to examine the hypothesized link



between televised violence and aggressive behavior in children. Official interpretation (phase 2A) will begin on March 21-23 when Senator Pastore holds hearings in the Communications Subcommittee. Pastore has said he wants policy recommendations. Some of the researchers seem ready for the next step (phase 3) of policy alternative delineation: "We cannot wait for all the evidence to come in. In this case it can never be all in. The real question is when do we as a society take action. When do we take action if even a small percentage of the population is affected in an undesirable way."<sup>44</sup>

Before action can be taken, a comprehensive list of alternatives must be compiled. Admittedly incomplete, these are five alternatives which are likely to emerge in the congressional hearings:

1. More research be sponsored in the areas suggested by the committee in its report to the Surgeon General;
2. More researchers be trained in the joint area of mass media research and child development;
3. An independent policy institute be established, probably at a university, to commission studies and synthesize results on the effects of mass media;
4. The FCC be asked to study the causal link between viewing televised violence and aggressive behavior;
5. The networks devote some small percent (perhaps 1%) of their net earnings to the development of new program materials that would be more suitable for children.

There is no final word on the TV-violence project. The repercussions will be felt for some time. Even without knowing how the story ends, we know that the outcome is important to the future of social policy research. Policymakers don't have to turn to social scientists for advice. If social scientists do not learn quickly from mistakes, they will not be a credible source of assistance.

One kind of repercussion, the attitudes of researchers toward the Surgeon General's Report, is being studied by means of a questionnaire which was sent to each of the principal investigators of the 23 research projects. The results, to date, are presented in Appendix III.

#### The "Coleman Study"

Like the TV-violence project, the equal educational opportunities study was required of HEW by Congress. The charge given was:

The commissioner shall conduct a survey and make a report to the President and the Congress, within two years of the enactment of this title, concerning the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities for individuals by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in public educational institutions at all levels in the United States....

#### Section 402, Civil Rights Act of 1964

James S. Coleman, professor of sociology at Johns Hopkins University, became principal investigator of the equal educational opportunities study. The study, as described in the "Coleman Report," has serious conceptual and analytical weaknesses, at least as a specimen of policy research.

Henry S. Dyer, vice president of Educational Testing Service, is one of the many who have critiqued the Coleman Report. The following passage, from his chapter in the book, Equal Educational Opportunity, is particularly insightful:

"...its criterion of academic achievement is almost exclusively a measure of verbal ability which has long been known to be a slow developing function that for obvious reasons is likely to be far more the product of the child's home than of his school experience. The Coleman study pays scant attention to the kinds of achievement on which the schools have traditionally focused. By contrast many of the criteria of achievement used in the Shaycoft<sup>45</sup>, study relate specifically to the subjects pupils actually study in school (literature, mathematics, business subjects, etc.), and it is precisely

in these subjects that there appear to be substantial differential effects among schools even when differences in socioeconomic levels have been accounted for. The other two earlier studies (Goodman, Mollenkopf-Melville) tend to reinforce these findings. In short, the nearly exclusive use of verbal ability as the measure of pupil achievement in the Coleman analysis probably makes for an underestimate of the importance of factors that school systems do in fact control. As suggested above, this underestimate is further exacerbated by the confining of the analysis to ethnic subsamples in which the schools, pupils, and pupil achievement are likely to be so homogeneous as to prevent important relationships from appearing. On both counts, then, the Coleman results have the unfortunate, though perhaps inadvertent, effect of giving school systems the false impression that there is not much they can do to improve the achievement of their pupils." <sup>46</sup>

Like the TV-violence project, the Coleman study failed to focus on policy implications. The report is criticized in Knowledge into Action in this way:

The Coleman Report shows that, on the average, Negroes come into school behind whites, and leave school even farther behind whites, in terms of educational achievement. The social implications of this finding are enormous. But the Coleman Report does not propose measures to remedy this problem since that was not its purpose; it merely reports a disheartening set of facts. The report has received little attention from government at any level, largely because it does not provide a practical solution to the problem that it documents. <sup>47</sup>

The first problem with the Coleman study was the set of variables chosen. Although the list of variables did include school factors, it emphasized family background factors. A policymaker has little control over out-of-school factors or experiences.



A second problem with the Coleman study was operationalization of variables. Certain variables that were meant to show school influence were operationalized in such a way that home influence was actually measured. For instance, achievement was measured only by verbal skills. These are the skills that the home influences to a large extent. Gain in knowledge of school-taught courses was not one of the measures used. Yet this is probably what the school influences.

A third problem with the Coleman study was the kind of data analysis performed. The deck was already loaded. The cards contained mainly variables that were strongly related to home influence. Then, when it came time to see what affected achievement scores the most, the researchers played the out-of-school cards first. The game was already over before the in-school cards had a chance to be used. (In the analysis, pupil social class was controlled before the relationship of school factors and achievement was tested.)

An additional analysis problem concerned the level of aggregation of in-school and out-of-school variables. Out-of-school variables were measured primarily at the individual level. Many in-school variables were measured at a higher level of aggregation -- in other words, diverse pupils were assigned the same score on in-school variables because they happened to attend the same school in the same district. There was no way that their heterogeneity could be reflected in the aggregate data.

Thus the out-of-school data were sensitive to individual differences -- they were parallel with individual performance measures. In-school data, because of necessary (?) aggregation, were less sensitive to individual differences and could not have been expected to account for much variance in individual performance.

The policymaker is unable to control many factors that influence a child's achievement. If school factors only account for a small amount of the variance, the policymaker still wants to know about them and how they function because they are probably the only aspect of the problem that can change.

Kurt Lang says:

Though a particular factor may account for only a small portion of the variance (in achievement levels, for example) it may be simple to manipulate and the change can have cumulative effects. Thus, even if the racial composition of the student body has no relationship to school achievement other than that attributable to its social class composition, the shortest route to full equality of educational opportunity may still be to change the racial composition of the segregated Negro school in order to expose the students to fellow students of a different social class.<sup>48</sup>

Daniel P. Moynihan describes how policymakers in OE reacted to the report:

The first response to these findings came, of course, from within the Office of Education where Coleman's conclusions caused not consternation but something near to alarm. Clearly this was not information that was going to be well received; the correct bureaucratic instinct was to run to the political executives of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for guidance. Consultations were held, reaching all the way to the Office of the Secretary, resulting ultimately in a summary report which was a political rather than a professional document. The political instinct was towards obscurity. The response of the Office of Education has now been carried to its logical conclusion: the Coleman Report is out-of-print, and there is apparently no intention to reprint.<sup>49</sup>

It will take only a few more Coleman Reports and TV-violence Reports before social policymakers will cease asking for help from social scientists. Unless social scientists learn from their mistakes, the "experimenting society" may be long postponed.

### Provisional Guidelines for Mandated Social Policy Research

The following three recommendations continue the theme of "learning from our mistakes." They are particularly applicable when advisory committees are placed in charge of research:<sup>50</sup>

1. No veto power
2. Specification of needed findings
3. Minority report option

No veto power. The TV-violence project proved what happens when a vested-interest group is given veto power. Two recommendations are possible. These might be called the two-sided veto option and the no-sided veto option. The first option means that when a controversial issue (e.g., most social policy issues) is to be researched, the representatives of both sides would be allowed to veto from the advisory committee all persons they felt would not be impartial to the evidence. This option, if followed, would probably lead to a neutral advisory committee having no particular interests or knowledge in the subject area.

The no-sided veto option means that no interest group would be permitted to veto potential committee members. Instead, qualified representatives of all interest groups would be actively recruited for committee membership.

Specification of needed findings. The first meetings of the advisory committee should be devoted to reviewing evidence already available and to specifying additional evidence that needs to be gathered. Both variables and methodologies need to be discussed by the committee. The result of these discussions would be a set of research specifications. Research specifically addressed to needed findings would then be contracted by the Request for Proposal (RFP) mechanism. The committee's specifications become the RFP and researchers are invited to submit proposals to do the stipulated research. In this way, academics would be given minimum opportunity to "do their own thing." The committee, having determined needed data and suitable methods, would be less able to say that the studies were inadequate and that other variables needed to be investigated.

Minority report option. No matter how carefully the specifications of needed research are laid out and how well the research is carried out, there may be legitimate differences in the way the evidence is interpreted. Once the committee has reviewed and discussed the evidence, a report should be written. Individuals who do not agree with the document should write a minority report that is issued with the majority report. This guideline must necessarily be an option, because the evidence, at times, may be so overwhelming that all of the advisory committee agree with its interpretation. However, when a real option exists for a minority report, these other plausible interpretations of the data should be made public, not suppressed.

#### Conclusion

This is very much a progress (or lack-of-progress) report on social policy research as reported in well-publicized studies before the eye of Congress and the public. There will be more to say on the TV violence project, in the aftermath of Senator Pastore's Communications Subcommittee hearings. It seems doubtful, however, that additional testimony will brighten the record of this project.

Adequate guidelines for mandated social policy research must be established in the future. Social policy research is still in its infancy. If it is to grow properly, it must know when it is performing well and when it is performing poorly. Once a full set of guidelines has been enumerated, they should be discussed and critiqued by social scientists and policymakers. The guidelines, once agreed on, will help to guarantee more fruitful participation in social policymaking by social scientists.

M. B. Paisley, "Social Policy Research and the Realities of the System:  
Violence Done to TV Research" March, 1972

APPENDIX I -- Chronology of Events Surrounding NIMH Violence Studies

VIOLENCE STUDIES		S. 2004
		1-69 WHDH's license revoked, principle of competitive licensing
3-69	Pastore suggests that Surgeon General commission TV-violence project similar to smoking project.	Hearings on FCC policies and TV programming
3-69	Pastore officially requests Secretary of HEW (Finch) to direct Surgeon General (Stewart) to assemble a committee to study TV violence.	Hearings still in progress.
3-69	Stewart makes statement to subcommittee regarding violence study, says \$1 million will be spent.	Hearings still in progress.
		3-69 President of NAB (Wasilewski) asks for legislation to require FCC to decide license renewals non-competitively.
		3-69 FCC proposes some changes in notice procedures for broadcast renewals.

VIOLENCE STUDIES		S. 2004	
3-69	Nixon writes letter to Pastore encouraging the 1-year violence project.		
4-69	Stewart requests names of potential members of the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee from the three networks and various associations.		
4-69	Stewart sends out list of 40 nominees to three networks. Frank Stanton of CBS declines to veto any names. NBC and ABC do.		
		5-69	Pastore writes to Comptroller General of U. S. for comments on S. 2004
8-69	Eli Rubinstein announces names of committee.		Hearings on S. 2004, which is to "establish orderly procedures for the consideration of applications for renewal of broadcast licenses."
Fall 69	Awards are made, eventually for 23 studies.		
		12-69	Continuation of hearings on S. 2004



VIOLENCE STUDIES		S. 2004
		1-70 FCC votes 6-1 to renew licenses of radio and television stations as long as they have "substantially" met community needs. FCC says it will give more weight to station's past performance than to competitors' future promises.
3-70	Letter from Metcalf to Finch, at Parker's request, regarding selection of committee.	
3-70	Letter from Parker to Bliss regarding selection of committee.	
4-70	Letter from Bliss to Parker, stating that for both the Committee on Smoking and Health and the Committee on Television and Social Behavior, "industry" was permitted to review names and register objections.	
4-70	Letter from Finch to Metcalf, essentially same content as Bliss letter to Parker.	
5-70	Open letter to Finch from Fellows at Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences, protesting procedures used to choose violence committee	

VIOLENCE STUDIES		S. 2004
5-70	<u>Science</u> article on com- and blackballing.	
6-71	Research report deadline.	
Summer- Fall 71	Subcommittees meet to draft summary reports.	
Fall- Winter 71	Committee meets to consider summary drafts and prepare its report to the Surgeon General. Character of final report takes shape in heated debate.	
1-72	Surgeon General re- leases report, "Tele- vision and Growing Up: the Impact of Televised Violence"	
1-72	<u>New York Times</u> gives report front page play but misses point.	
2-72	Researchers protest report and early media coverage.	
2-72	"Corrective" media coverage begins.	
2-72	Pastore sets date for hearings, 3-21/24-72.	
Spring 72	Original forty-plus research reports to be issued.	

Appendix II. NIMH TV-Violence Awards, Topics, Approximate Amounts. <sup>51</sup>

- Cedric Clark, Stanford: Race vs. role as determinants of TV identification. \$25, 000.
- Paul Ekman, U. C. San Francisco Medical Center: Facial expression and mass media violence. \$116, 000.
- Seymour Feshbach, U. C. L. A. : Effects of reality vs. fantasy in filmed violence. \$35, 000.
- W. David Foulkes, U. Wyoming: Televised violence and dream content. \$19, 000.
- Robert Liebert, S. U. N. Y. Stony Brook: Effects of televised aggression on children. \$13, 000.
- Jack Lyle, U. C. L. A. : Children's use of TV. \$40, 000.
- Malcolm McLean, U. Iowa: Child perception of violence as a function of TV violence. \$5, 000.
- Jennie McIntyre, U. Maryland: Television violence and deviant behavior. \$50, 000.
- Nathan Maccoby, Stanford: Children's responses to television violence. \$87, 000.
- W. R. Simmons, W. R. Simmons and Associates, New York: Demographic characteristics of viewers of violence in TV programming. \$5, 000.
- Aletha Stein, Pennsylvania State: Television content and young children's behavior. \$50, 000.
- Percy Tannenbaum, U. C. Berkeley: Studies in film and television mediated arousal and aggression. \$150, 000.
- Scott Ward, Harvard: Research in social effects of advertising. \$25, 000.
- Robert Bechtel, Kansas City: Some correlates of TV viewing. \$34, 000.
- Natan Katzman, Michigan State: Color TV and child development as a basis of learning. \$15, 000.
- Jack McLeod, U. Wisconsin: Adolescents, parents, and TV use. \$38, 000.
- Steven Chaffee, U. Wisconsin: Adolescent TV use in family context. \$12, 000.
- Bradley Greenberg, Michigan State: Social class differences in response to filmed aggression. \$96, 000.
- George Gerbner, U. Pennsylvania: Content analysis of network TV drama, 1969. \$47, 000.
- Paul Furfey, Catholic U.: Children's TV viewing patterns. \$14, 000.
- Munroe Lefkowitz, Albany: Longitudinal study, TV and aggression. \$41, 000.
- Aaron Specter, Temple: National inventory of TV viewing behavior. \$78, 000.

## APPENDIX III -- Researchers' Responses to Questionnaire Concerning "Television and Growing Up" and Media Coverage

### Background

On January 24, 1972, questionnaires were mailed from Stanford to 38 researchers who had been principal investigators or associates of the 23 studies that comprise the NIMH TV-violence project. Somewhat more than 38 professionals had been associated with the studies, but, at the time the questionnaire was mailed, some were out of the country and at least one had died.

As of March 1, 23 researchers have returned usable questionnaires. Two others responded that they did not feel that they could complete the questionnaire until they had read more of the report and/or original research papers. Three questionnaires were returned as undeliverable at the last known address. Ten researchers have not yet been heard from.

Some respondents objected to questions #2 and #3 as simplistic (see below). However, their either-ors were taken from the "Surgeon General's Report" as literally as possible.

Respondents were promised anonymity, although some said they would be quite willing to have their names associated with their opinions. Unfortunately, it is difficult to make partial attributions while preserving the anonymity of others. Therefore all identification has been replaced by code letters "A", "B", etc., below.

### Results

Open-ended responses are transcribed verbatim. Closed-ended responses are summarized in terms of the mode and median.

Question #1. What is your initial reaction to the Surgeon General's Report?

On a five-point scale from "extremely favorable" to "not at all favorable," the mode and median both fall in the "somewhat not favorable" category. Nine people checked this response, while others were distributed around it.

Respondent G distinguished between two feelings: the report was not as bad as he had expected, given the composition of the committee, but as a scientific report it was poor. Respondent H "found the summary report a bit guilty of underreporting and overqualification." Respondent U: "I would have preferred a stronger report but can also see the possibilities of more cautious interpretation. Unfortunately, the gross malfeasance of the New York Times in misconstruing the report makes it hard to react to the report instead of the report on the report."

Respondent V: "Some things are OK; there are many thoughtful and insightful passages. Some things are questionable or too weakly or poorly stated."

Question #2. Would you say, in general, your research findings are that:

(a) viewing television violence increases aggressiveness; (b) viewing television violence decreases aggressiveness; (c) viewing television violence has no effect on aggressiveness; (d) the relationship between violence viewing and aggressiveness depends on a third variable or set of variables; (e) other, please specify?

Twenty respondents chose one or the other of these alternatives (extracted literally from the conceptual discussion in the Surgeon General's Report). Eleven of the 20 chose (a), that violence viewing causes aggressiveness. Four chose (d), the "third variable" explanation, and five chose (e), the other response.

Respondents C, D, M, S, and U (some of whom check the (e) response) stated that their research had not been designed to reflect upon these alternatives. Respondent E said that violence viewing increases aggressive attitudes, not necessarily aggressiveness itself.

Question #3. Whatever the findings of your own research suggest, which of the following relationships of violence viewing to aggressiveness do you now feel is the most plausible? (Same choices as Question #2)

Twenty respondents answered this question. Fourteen chose (a), that violence viewing increases aggressiveness. Five chose (d), the "third variable" explanation, and one chose (e) to say that there are probably several relationships. Three researchers qualified their (a) response by saying "for certain groups of children, " invoking the predisposition theory.

Thus, summarizing Questions #2 and #3, 55% of these respondents felt that their own research pointed to a positive relationship between violence viewing and aggressiveness, and 70% felt that, whatever their own research might indicate, the main thrust of all the research pointed to a positive relationship.



Respondent B commented: "I agree with the S. G. report that this inference is tentative. But so is any scientific inference."

Question #4. Do you feel the conclusions of your research are accurately and adequately covered in the Surgeon General's Report?"

Responses are split between 11 "yes" and 11 "no" on the question of accuracy of treatment. On the question of adequate depth, there are 9 "yes" and 13 "no". Respondent B commented that, "in fact, they went too deep on some of our extraneous findings, in order to obscure the main conclusion." Respondents G, L, and P spoke of "strange emphases," "misleading focus," and "selective emphases," respectively. Respondents E and F spoke of errors in reporting their research. Respondent T stated that "the conclusions are diluted and overqualified."

Respondent V said: "I really don't think the people who wrote the appropriate chapter in the S. G. report either read or understood the conclusions in my research."

Respondent X said: "I do not feel that the conclusions of my research are adequately or accurately covered in the report of the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General, but then I would not expect the unanimous report of such a heterogeneous committee to be anything but a compromise document, and was pleasantly surprised to see that it was a little more than that."

Question #5. Do you plan to do research on the effects of television violence in the near future?

There are 9 "yes," 10 "no" and 3 "maybe" responses to this question. As for the direction of future research, Respondent B said that he wanted to concentrate on longitudinal studies, which the committee "seemed afraid to suggest very strongly." Respondent G disagreed with the committee on the question of further experimental studies -- he for it, they against it.

Question #6. The Surgeon General's Report says there are two crucial questions: (a) How often does violence on television cause violent behavior, what predispositional conditions have to be there, and what different undesirable, as well as benign, forms the aggressive reaction takes when it occurs? (b) How much contribution to the violence of our society is made by extensive violent television viewing by our youth?  
Do you agree that these are the important questions regarding the effects of television?

In direct response to this question, 9 researchers said "yes" and 12 said "no." Those who said "no" were asked to suggest alternative "most important questions." Respondent B said: "(a) How the demonstrated harmful effects of TV violence can be modified by social controls -- by parents, etc. (b) Whether any other factors could be shown to account for aggressiveness as much as we have found TV violence does. (c) Whether the S. G. report and its press coverage have induced the public irrevocably

to believe that TV violence is harmless to kids."

Respondent E suggested: "What is the relationship between the emotional response of the viewer and TV input and subsequent behavior?"

Respondent G: "What techniques can parents, teachers, and others use to minimize effects? What production decisions can TV producers, networks, etc., make to lessen impact of violence?"

Respondent I: "To what extent are norms about the acceptability of aggression being altered by extensive violent TV viewing?"

Respondent M: "The broader question of how people learn from television and what, if anything, they do learn. Whether or not television content reflects the beliefs and values of one subgroup in the system or societal values as a whole."

Respondent N: "Whether the large amount of TV violence leads to perception or evaluation of violence as an acceptable/efficacious means for solving problems in some proportion of cases."

Respondent U: "How can TV be better used more widely and more popularly for pro-social training?" (Cites the Stein study on positive modeling.)

Respondent V: "What are the behavioral processes by which TV violence affects behavior? How can these be counteracted? What would be the social consequences of removing most or all

violent television, or showing more realistic violence on dramatic programs?!"

Respondent W: "(In addition to the two stated questions) Are there conditions under which violence on TV reduces or helps control aggression? A more important issue has to do with definitions of violence (both on TV and in society): certain forms of violence are considered undesirable; others (e.g., war, police violence) are presumably not considered undesirable. I think the researchers failed to confront the policymakers with the a priori issue: are they really opposed to violence or only opposed to violence in opposition to social norms?"

Respondent X: "The important question is what television violence teaches about life and people."

Question #7. The text of the original research reports is being released rather long after the release date of the Surgeon General's Report. The delay makes it difficult for other social scientists, policymakers and the public to reach an independent judgment about the project. How important do you perceive the publication discrepancy to be?

The modal response was split between "extremely important" (9) and "somewhat important" (9). Five respondents felt that the publication discrepancy was not important. One respondent objected to the "conspiratorial" wording of the question.

Question #8. What is your reaction to media coverage of the Surgeon General's Report?

Fifteen respondents thought that media coverage was, in general, inaccurate. Six thought that it was, in general, accurate.

Respondent B: "The headlines were the worst, but the articles weren't much better. I doubt if even Klapper would buy the original NY Times article, although it must have pleased him."

Respondent Q acknowledged that press interpretations were inaccurate, but said "the report invites misunderstanding."

Respondent U: "Exceedingly inept handling."

Respondent X said that some press reports were very accurate and some were very inaccurate, so that, on the average, they were half accurate.

Question #9. Do you feel that in the Surgeon General's Report any scientific norms have not been respected?

Structured choices were "openness" and "disinterestedness," but respondents were asked to write in others as well. The negative cast of the question is unfortunate, and responses may have to be discounted to some extent. Four respondents felt that the "openness" norm had not been respected, and 16 felt that the "disinterestedness" norm had not been respected.

Respondent B added: "Responsibility to the evidence and not to go beyond it. The report tries to give the impression that "other factors" have been shown to account for aggressiveness, when in fact they are only logically possible."

Several respondents faulted the committee for hypercautiousness, but couldn't decide if refusal to draw conclusions involved a scientific norm.

Respondent V said: "The voice of the researcher himself is muffled. Couldn't they have included at least the abstracts of research in the Appendix, so the reader could look at what kinds of evidence the committee worked from?"

Question #10. What follow-through do you feel is appropriate in the aftermath of the NIMH project?

Several follow-throughs were suggested to respondents, with these results:

A critical publication	18
A researcher/policymaker symposium	11
A sequel research project	10
FCC hearings	13
Congressional hearings	13

Respondents generally chose several follow-throughs as the frequencies indicate. There was some polarization on the question of additional research. About half the respondents



to this question and adds, "assuming we keep exercising our voices. I'd prefer to do it as a group, especially since that's the way the networks did it on the committee." He footnotes the comment that: "We have been used by the TV industry. . . . It isn't just that they had more money and political inroads. They were too shrewd for us. The S. G. report is a remarkably skillful exercise in public relations by the networks and NAB. Some of us should have seen that coming."

A number of respondents, however, feel that the evidence was not strong enough for any other kind of report. They seem to feel that the exclusion of researchers from the final report preparation phases was more of a gratuitous insult than a vital issue. Of course, others disagree strenuously.

Respondent D said: "It might be useful for the researchers (who were prevented from making recommendations in the original reports) to do so now, independently, with some forum available to adequately publicize their recommendations."

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28. Hearings, March 20. P. 466. Some background on the continuity issue: There have been 74 cases of license revocation or renewal denial by the FCC since 1934. Of the total number of renewals processed during those 37 years, the revocations and denials average out to about 2 per 1000. In this case, WHDH had operated under a series of temporary licenses for 12 years prior to 1969, because the FCC was concerned about some specifics of the license. Finally the FCC asked that new applications be submitted for Channel 5 within a two-month period. Reviewing the WHDH application and the new applications at the same time, the FCC awarded the license to one of the new applicants. This procedure has come to be known as "comparative licensing."
29. The full text is: "A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to establish orderly procedures for the consideration of applications for renewal of broadcast licenses. Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that Section 309(a) shall be amended by adding the following after the final sentence thereof: 'Notwithstanding any other provision of the Act, the Commission, in acting upon any application for renewal of a broadcast license filed under Section 308,

may not consider the application of any other person for the facilities for which renewal is sought. If the Commission finds upon the record and representations of the licensee that the public interest, convenience, and necessity has been and would be served thereby, it shall grant the renewal application. If the Commission determines after a hearing that a grant of the renewal application would not be in the public interest, convenience, and necessity, it shall deny such application, and applications for construction permits by other parties may then be accepted, pursuant to Section 308, for the broadcast series previously licensed to the renewal application whose renewal was denied. '"

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